



Small Projects Day, Section 1: Project Proposal

1. **Responsible Official:** Martina Barnes, Manchester District Ranger
2. **Project Name:** Adam Wilcox Permit Amendment #1
3. **Project Location:** U.S. Tract # 476, Town of Manchester, Bennington County, Vermont.
4. **Project Contact:** Jen Edmonds, Natural Resource Specialist, 802-747-6746 or jennifer.edmonds@usda.gov
5. **Purpose and Need:** The purpose and need for cultivating in this location is to address a dense infestation of wild parsnip, a non-native invasive species that occupies the center of a permanent wildlife opening that is partially slated for floodplain restoration. The wildlife opening is bordered on two sides by the Batten Kill River, on one side by a road, and on the fourth side by a state-significant buttonbush swamp. Rare plants and animals are known from the river's edge. Other non-native invasive plants have been treated from along the river's edge, and now the wild parsnip needs to be addressed at the center of this site. Eventually, trees typical of a floodplain forest would be planted within the 100-year floodplain, which overlaps part of the wild parsnip infestation. Although a glyphosate-based herbicide would likely reduce the wild parsnip, the density makes it a poor candidate for hand application of herbicide, and broadcast herbicide is not authorized using this type of non-selective herbicide. Likewise, although we have hand tools designed to control wild parsnip, the quantity of wild parsnip at this site would render manual control unfeasible. The proposed cultivation would give us the opportunity to experiment with what might be a more effective control method, would not have any cost to the Forest Service, and part of the opening could someday be converted to floodplain forest, with much less competition from wild parsnip, leaving less than 5 acres of the 8.3 acre field for continued cultivation.
6. **Project Description:** The project would consist of the issuance of a special use permit amendment to the Wilcox Cultivation Permit, MAN276-01. The amendment would allow Mr. Wilcox to cultivate the 8.3 acre field adjacent to his current permit area. In 2020, he would plow the field, plant sudangrass, and mow it twice. In 2021, the field would be plowed, smoothed, planted with alfalfa and clover, and mowed 3 times a year. Compost and wood ash would be applied to the field as fertilizer. The existing access from the road to the Deerfield River would be maintained. The amendment would expire with the permit on 4/1/2022. The following mitigation measures as found in the Annual Mowing of the Richville Road Openings Decision Memo would still apply:

Botany and Rare Plants

To provide an adequate habitat buffer for great blue lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*) and butternut (*Juglans cinerea*) as well as other rare, non-RFSS plant species, equipment must be operated at least 100 feet from the river.

Non-Native Invasive Plants (NNIP)

To prevent new introductions of NNIP, any equipment brought in to implement the project should be clean (free of mud and plant debris that could include seeds or other propagules) prior to accessing the site. In some instances a stiff broom may be adequate, while in others, high pressure water may be needed. Cleaning requirements would be reviewed by the Forest Botanist.



To prevent the spread of NNIP from these sites to other locations, equipment must be cleaned prior to leaving the site.

Mow away from opening edges to avoid the following NNIP known or believed to occur at the edges of these openings: multiflora rose, common and glossy buckthorn, Amur honeysuckle, Norway maple, Japanese knotweed, purple loosestrife, Japanese barberry, and wild parsnip (this species can easily be spread by mowing).

Soil and Water

To prevent rutting and compaction, mowing with heavy equipment would be done when soils are sufficiently dry.

Activities are prohibited from taking place in Class II wetlands.

National Core Best Management Practices for Aquatic Ecosystems Management Activities would be followed (National Best Management Practices for Water Quality Management on National Forest Systems Lands, Volume 1 National Core BMP Technical Guide. pp.21-23)

Wildlife

To protect nesting birds and other wildlife, mowing of should not occur between May 1st and August 1st to protect nesting birds and other wildlife. If these activities do need to occur between the aforementioned dates, the permit holder would contact the Forest Service at least 72 hours in advance to arrange for field surveys to be done prior to implementation to determine if there are any nesting birds.

Surveys would be conducted for the wood turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*), a Regional Forester's Sensitive Species. If these surveys detect the presence of wood turtles in or near the Richville Road fields, the following mitigation measures would be required when fields are mowed:

- 1) A wildlife biologist would walk ahead of the mower and other machinery to relocate any turtles that are encountered.
- 2) The mowing bar shall be set no lower than six inches above the ground.

7. Forest Plan Management Area: Diverse Forest Use

- 8. Forest Plan Compliance:** Nested within Goal 2 of the Forest-wide Goals and Objectives (Forest Plan: p. 11) is the long-term objective to maintain 1% to 5% of the forest as permanent upland openings. Another objective under Goal 2 is to minimize adverse effects of non-native invasive species on National Forest resources; program efforts include introduction preventing, inventory, containment, and abatement.

This project would also contribute toward meeting Goal 8 of the Forest-wide Goals and Objectives (Forest Plan: p. 14): "Provide a sustainable supply of forest products."

Permanent upland openings are a component of the desired future condition of the Diverse Forest Use MA: "Permanent upland and temporary openings will occur across the landscape in shapes and sizes that are consistent with visual objectives in the area (Forest Plan: p. 47)."



Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines, Non-Recreation Special Uses, G-6, “Agricultural uses should meet the requirement of having a clear and significant public benefit, such as maintaining desirable open spaces as determined by appropriate analysis. Do not authorize such uses merely to continue a past use on land now part of the National Forest System (Forest Plan: p. 45).”

- 9. Exclusion Category:** 220.6(e)(3) Approval, modification, or continuation of special uses that require less than 20 acres of NFS lands.

10. Expected Implementation Date: May 2021



Forest
Service

Eastern Region, Green Mountain National Forest
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender